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Terminology Relating to Steel, Stainless Steel, Related Alloys, and Ferroalloys[1]

This standard is issued under the fixed designation A 941; the number immediately following the designation indicates the year of original adoption or, in the case of revision, the year of last revision. A number in parentheses indicates the year of last reapproval. A superscript epsilon (ε) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

1. Scope*

1.1 This standard is a compilation of definitions of terms related to steel, stainless steel, related alloys, and ferroalloys.

1.2 When a term is used in an ASTM document for which Committee A01 is responsible, it is included herein only when judged, after review by Subcommittee A01.92, to be a generally usable term.

1.3 Some definitions include a discussion section, which is a mandatory part of the definition and contains additional information that is relevant to the meaning of the defined term.

1.4 Definitions of terms specific to a particular standard will appear in that standard and will supersede any definitions of identical terms in this standard.

[1] This terminology is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee A01 on Steel, Stainless Steel, and Related Alloys and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee A01.92 on Terminology.

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***A Summary of Changes section appears at the end of this standard.**

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:* [2]

E 112 Test Methods for Determining Average Grain Size

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions of General Terms:*

alloy steel, *n*—a **steel**, other than a **stainless steel**, that conforms to a specification that requires one or more of the following elements, by mass percent, to have a minimum content equal to or greater than: 0.30 for aluminum; 0.0008 for boron; 0.30 for chromium; 0.30 for cobalt; 0.40 for copper; 0.40 for lead; 1.65 for manganese; 0.08 for molybdenum; 0.30 for nickel; 0.06 for niobium (columbium); 0.60 for silicon; 0.05 for titanium; 0.30 for tungsten (wolfram); 0.10 for vanadium; 0.05 for zirconium; or 0.10 for any other alloying element, except sulphur, phosphorus, carbon, and nitrogen.

capped steel, *n*—a **rimmed steel** in which, during ingot solidification, the rimming action was limited by mechanical or chemical means.

carbon steel, *n*—a **steel** that conforms to a specification that prescribes a maximum limit, by **heat analysis** in mass percent, of not more than: 2.00 for carbon and 1.65 for manganese, but does not prescribe a minimum limit for chromium, cobalt, molybdenum, nickel, niobium (columbium), tungsten (wolfram), vanadium, or zirconium.

DISCUSSION—Except as required above, it is permissible for carbon steel specifications to prescribe limits (minimum or maximum, or both) for each specified alloying element, subject to the following restrictions for the heat analysis limits in mass percent:
(a) for wrought carbon steel products, the specified maximum limit is not to exceed: 0.10 for aluminum, 0.60 for silicon, and 0.050 for titanium;
(b) for carbon steel castings, the specified maximum limit is not to exceed: 0.10 for aluminum, 1.00 for silicon, and 0.050 for titanium.
(c) for **carbon steels** that are required to be rephosphorized, the specified minimum limit for phosphorus is not to be less than 0.040;
(d) for **carbon steels** that are required to be resulfurized, the specified minimum limit for sulfur is not to be less than 0.060;
(e) for **carbon steels** that are not required to be rephosphorized or resulfurized, the specified maximum limit is not to exceed: 0.60 for copper, 0.050 for phosphorus, and 0.060 for sulfur; and
(f) for **carbon steels** that are required to contain boron, copper, or lead, the specified minimum limit is not to exceed: 0.0005 for boron, 0.35 for copper, and 0.25 for lead.

cast analysis— Deprecated term. Use the preferred term **heat analysis**.

certificate of compliance, *n*—*in manufactured products*, a document that states that the product was manufactured, sampled, tested, and inspected in accordance with the requirements of the specification (including year of issue) and any other requirements specified in the purchase order or contract, and has been found to meet such requirements.

DISCUSSION—A single document, containing test report information and certificate of compliance information, may be used.

certifying organization, *n*— *in product specifications*, the entity responsible for the conformance and certification of the product to the specification requirements.

check analysis— Deprecated term. Use the preferred term **product analysis**.

coarse grain practice, *n*—a steelmaking practice for other than **stainless steel** that is intended to produce a **killed steel** in which aluminum, niobium (columbium), titanium, and vanadium are **residual elements** .

cold working, *n*—mechanical deformation of a metal at temperatures below its **recrystallization temperature** .

defect, *n*—an imperfection of sufficient magnitude to warrant rejection based on the specified requirements.

direct quenching, *n*— *in thermomechanical processing*, **quenching** immediately following the final hot deformation.

electronic data interchange, *n*—the computer to computer exchange of business information in a standardized format.

ellipsis, *n*—*in a tabular entry*, three periods (...) that indicate that there is no requirement.

ferroalloy, *n*—an alloy of iron and one or more other metals, for use as an addition to the molten metal during the manufacture of **steels**, nickel alloys, or cobalt alloys.

fine grain practice, *n*—a steelmaking practice for other than **stainless steel** that is intended to produce a **killed steel** that is capable of meeting the requirements specified for fine austenitic grain size.

DISCUSSION—It normally involves the addition of one or more austenitic grain refining elements in amounts that have been established by the steel producer as being sufficient. Austenitic grain refining elements include, but are not limited to, aluminum, niobium (columbium), titanium, and vanadium.

grain size, *n*—the dimensions of the grains or crystals in a polycrystalline metal, exclusive of twinned regions and subgrains when present.

DISCUSSION—**Grain size** is usually estimated or measured on the cross section of an aggregate of grains, and designated by an ASTM grain size number. (See Test Methods E 112.)

heat, *n*—a generic term denoting a specific **lot** of **steel**, based upon steelmaking and casting considerations.

[2] For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, ~~Vol 03.01~~. volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

DISCUSSION—Where it is necessary to be more definitive, the following more specific terms are used: **primary heat**, **multiple heat**, and **remelted heat**. In product specifications, the term **heat** generally is used, without qualification, to mean the **primary**, **multiple**, or **remelted heat**, whichever is applicable.

heat analysis, *n*—the chemical analysis determined by the steel producer as being representative of a specific **heat** of **steel**.

DISCUSSION—Where the analysis reported by the steel producer is not sufficiently complete for conformance with the heat analysis requirements of the applicable product specification to be fully assessed, the **manufacturer** may complete the assessment of conformance with such heat analysis requirements by using a product analysis for the **specified elements** that were not reported by the steel producer, provided that product analysis tolerances are not applied and the **heat analysis** is not altered.

heat number, *n*—the alpha, numeric, or alphanumeric designator used to identify a specific **heat** of **steel**.

high-strength low-alloy steel, *n*— a **steel**, other than a **carbon steel** or an **interstitial-free steel**, that conforms to a specification that requires the minimum content for each specified alloying element to be lower than the applicable limit in the definition for **alloy steel**, and the yield point or yield strength of the product to be at least 36 ksi or 250 MPa.

hot-cold working, *n*—the mechanical deformation of austenitic and precipitation hardening steels at a temperature just below the **recrystallization temperature** to increase the yield strength and hardness by plastic deformation or precipitation hardening effects induced by plastic deformation, or both.

hot working, *n*—mechanical deformation of a metal at temperatures above its **recrystallization temperature**.

imperfection, *n*—a material discontinuity or irregularity that is detectable by **inspection**.

inspection, *n*—the process of measuring, examining, testing, gaging, or otherwise comparing the unit of product with the applicable requirements.

interstitial-free steel, *n*—a **steel** that has essentially all of its carbon and nitrogen chemically combined with stabilization elements rather than being present interstitially.

DISCUSSION—The heat analysis limits (minimum or maximum, or both) that are permitted to be prescribed in interstitial-free steel specifications are as given in the definition for **carbon steel**, except that the 0.050 % maximum limit for titanium does not apply.

killed steel, *n*—a **steel** deoxidized to such a level that essentially no reaction occurred between carbon and oxygen during solidification.

laser beam welding, *n*—a welding process that uses a laser beam as the heat source.

lot, *n*—a definite quantity of product manufactured under conditions that are considered uniform.

low-alloy steel, *n*—a **steel**, other than a **carbon steel** or an **interstitial-free steel**, that conforms to a specification that requires the minimum content for each specified alloying element to be lower than the applicable limit in the definition for **alloy steel**.

manufacturer, *n*—the organization responsible for the conversion of materials into products meeting the requirements of a product specification.

microalloyed steel, *n*—a **low-alloy steel** that conforms to a specification that requires the presence of one or more carbide-, nitride-, or carbonitride-forming elements, generally in individual concentrations less than 0.15 mass percent, to enhance strength.

DISCUSSION—The most common microalloying elements are niobium (columbium), titanium, and vanadium.

multiple heat, *n*—two or more molten **primary heats**, in whole or in part, combined in a common ladle or in a common non-oscillating mold.

DISCUSSION—A **multiple heat** is identified by a single **heat number** representative of the **multiple heat**, or by the individual **heat numbers** of the **primary heats** contained in the **multiple heat**. The **heat analysis** of a **multiple heat** identified by a single **heat number** is the weighted average analysis of the individual **primary heats** contained in the **multiple heat**. Two or more molten **primary heats** sequentially strand cast (poured into an oscillating mold) constitute a series of individual **heats**, not a **multiple heat**.

plate-as-rolled, *n*—the quantity of plate product rolled at one time, either from an individual slab or directly from an ingot.

DISCUSSION—This term does not refer to the surface condition or the heat-treatment state of the material; a **plate-as-rolled** may be in the as-rolled condition, or may have received one or more surface treatments or **heat treatments**, or both.

primary heat, *n*—the product of a single cycle of a batch melting process.

DISCUSSION—In the investment casting industry, the term *master heat* is used.

product analysis, *n*—a chemical analysis of a specimen taken from the semi-finished product or the finished product.

remelted heat, *n*—the product of the remelting of a **primary heat**, in whole or in part.

DISCUSSION—In the investment casting industry, the term *sub-heat* is used.

residual element, *n*— *in* ***steel***, a specified or unspecified element, not intentionally added, originating in the raw materials, refractories, or surrounding atmospheres used in steel making.

rimmed steel, *n*—a **steel** that contained sufficient oxygen to generate carbon monoxide at the boundary between the solid metal and the remaining molten metal during solidification, resulting in an outer layer low in carbon.

semikilled steel, *n*—an incompletely deoxidized **steel** that contained sufficient oxygen to form enough entrapped carbon monoxide during solidification to offset solidification shrinkage.

specified element, *n*— *in* ***steel***, an element controlled to a specified minimum, maximum, or range, in accordance with the requirements of the applicable product specification.

stabilized stainless steel, *n*—a **stainless steel** that conforms to a specification that prescribes limits (minimum or range) for niobium (columbium), tantalum, titanium, or a combination thereof.

DISCUSSION—Such limits are sometimes expressed as a function of the carbon and nitrogen contents. In an appropriately annealed condition, a **stabilized stainless steel** will resist sensitization to intergranular corrosion associated with the precipitation of chromium carbide at grain boundaries as a result of thermal exposure, such as **annealing, stress relieving**, welding, or high temperature service. Resistance to sensitization to intergranular corrosion is dependent upon the corrosivity of the environment. The condition of being stabilized with respect to sensitization is frequently demonstrated by passing one or more standard corrosion tests for sensitization.

stainless steel, *n*—a **steel** that conforms to a specification that requires, by mass percent, a minimum chromium content of 10.5 or more, and a maximum carbon content of less than 1.20.

steel, *n*—a material that conforms to a specification that requires, by mass percent, more iron than any other element and a maximum carbon content of generally less than 2.

DISCUSSION—The iron content requirement is not normally stated in the specification and is not normally determined by chemical analysis, but is taken to be 100 % minus the sum of the mean values permitted by the specification for all other elements having a specified range or a specified maximum. For conformance purposes, this calculated value for iron is compared on an individual basis to the mean values permitted by the specification for each of the other elements having a specified range or a specified maximum. Some chromium-containing steels may contain more than 2 % carbon; however, 2 % carbon is generally considered to be the demarcation between **steel** and cast iron.

strain hardening, *n*—an increase in hardness and strength of a metal caused by plastic deformation at temperatures below its **recrystallization temperature**. (Syn. *work hardening*)

test record, *n*—a document or electronic record that contains the observations and derived data obtained by applying a given test method.

test report, *n*—a document that presents the applicable qualitative or quantitative results obtained by applying one or more given test methods.

DISCUSSION—A single document, containing test report information and certificate of compliance information, may be used.

unspecified element, *n*— *in* ***steel***, an element not controlled to a specified minimum, maximum, or range, in accordance with the requirements of the applicable product specification.

3.2 *Definitions of Terms Relating to Heat Treatment of Steels:*

Ac_{cm}, Ac_1, Ac_3, Ac_4—See **transformation temperature**.

Ae_{cm}, Ae_1, Ae_3, Ae_4—See **transformation temperature**.

age hardening, *n*—hardening by **aging**, usually after rapid cooling or **cold working**.

aging, *n*—a change in the properties of certain **steels** that occurs at ambient or moderately elevated temperatures after hot working or a heat treatment (**quench aging, natural aging,** or **artificial aging**) or after a cold-working operation (**strain aging**).

DISCUSSION—The change in properties is often, but not always, due to **precipitation hardening**, but never involves a change in the chemical composition of the **steel**.

annealing, *n*—a generic term covering any of several **heat treatments**.

DISCUSSION—This treatment is used for purposes such as reducing hardness, improving machinability, facilitating **cold working**, producing a desired microstructure, or obtaining desired mechanical, physical, or other properties. Where applicable, it is preferred that the following more specific terms be used: ~~**black annealing, box**~~**box annealing, bright annealing, flame annealing, full annealing, graphitization annealing, intermediate annealing, isothermal annealing, process annealing,** ~~**quench annealing,**~~ **recrystallization annealing, spheroidizing**, and **subcritical annealing**. The term "**annealing**," without qualification, implies **full annealing**. Any process of **annealing** will usually reduce stresses; however, if the treatment is applied for the sole purpose of stress reduction, it should be designated **stress relieving**.

Ar_{cm}, Ar_1, Ar_3, Ar_4—See **transformation temperature**.

artificial aging, *n*— **aging** above room temperature.

austempering, *n*— **heat treatment** involving **quenching** a steel object from a temperature above the **transformation range** in a medium maintained at a temperature above the **martensite range** sufficiently fast to avoid the formation of high temperature transformation products, and then holding it at that temperature until transformation is complete.

austenitizing, *n*—forming austenite by heating a steel object above the **transformation range** .

baking, *n*—heating to a low temperature in order to remove gases.

batch furnace, *n*—a heating device within which steel objects are held stationary or oscillated during the thermal processing cycle.

~~**black annealing,** *n*— **box annealing** steel sheet, strip, or wire.~~

blank carburizing, *n*—simulating the **carburizing** operation without introducing carbon.

DISCUSSION—This is usually accomplished by using an inert material in place of the carburizing agent, or by applying a suitable protective coating on the object being heat treated.

blank nitriding, *n*—simulating the nitriding operation without introducing nitrogen.

DISCUSSION—This is usually accomplished by using an inert material in place of the nitriding agent, or by applying a suitable protective coating on the object being heat treated.

bluing, *n*—subjecting the scale-free surface of a steel object to the action of air, steam, or other agents at a suitable temperature, thereby forming a thin blue film of oxide and improving the object's appearance and corrosion resistance.

DISCUSSION—This term is ordinarily applied to sheet, strip, or finished parts. It is used also to denote the heating of springs after fabrication in order to improve their properties.

box annealing, *n*— **annealing** in a sealed container under conditions that minimize oxidation.

DISCUSSION—The charge is usually heated slowly to a temperature below the **transformation range**, but sometimes above or within it, and is then cooled slowly.

bright annealing, *n*— **annealing** in a protective medium to prevent discoloration of the bright surface.

carbon potential, *n*—the carbon content at the surface of a specimen of pure iron in equilibrium with the carburizing medium considered, and under the conditions specified.

carbon restoration, *n*—replacing the carbon lost from the surface layer in previous processing by carburizing this layer to substantially the original carbon level.

carbonitriding, *n*— **case hardening** in which a suitable steel object is heated above Ac_1 in a gaseous atmosphere of such composition as to cause simultaneous absorption of carbon and nitrogen by the surface and, by diffusion, to create a concentration gradient.

carburizing, *n*—a process in which an austenitized steel object is brought into contact with a carbonaceous environment of sufficient carbon potential to cause absorption of carbon at the surface and, by diffusion, to create a concentration gradient.

case, *n*—*in case hardening*, the outer portion that has been made harder than the **core** as a result of altered composition or microstructure, or both, from treatments such as **carburizing, nitriding** , and **induction hardening**.

case hardening, *n*—a generic term covering any of several processes applicable to **steel** that change the chemical composition or microstructure, or both, of the surface layer.

DISCUSSION—The processes commonly used are: **carburizing** and **quench hardening**; ~~**cyaniding**~~; **nitriding**; and **carbonitriding**. It is preferred that the applicable specific process name be used.

cementation, *n*—the introduction of one or more elements into the outer portion of a steel object by means of diffusion at high temperature.

cold treatment, *n*—exposing a steel object to temperatures below room temperature for the purpose of obtaining desired conditions or properties, such as dimensional or structural stability.

conditioning heat treatment, *n*—a preliminary **heat treatment** used to prepare a steel object for a desired reaction to a subsequent **heat treatment**.

continuous-conveyance furnace, *n*— a heating device through which steel objects are intentionally moved at a constant rate during the thermal processing cycle.

controlled cooling, *n*—cooling a steel object from an elevated temperature in a predetermined manner to avoid hardening, cracking, or internal damage, or to produce a desired microstructure or mechanical properties.

core, *n*—*in case hardening*, the interior portion of unaltered composition or microstructure, or both, of a case hardened steel object.

core, *n*—*in clad products*, the central portion of a multilayer composite metallic material.

critical cooling rate, *n*—the slowest rate of continuous cooling at which austenite can be cooled from above the **transformation range** to prevent its transformation above M_s.

~~**cyaniding,** *n*—introducing carbon and nitrogen into a solid steel object by holding it above Ac_1 in contact with molten cyanide of suitable composition.~~

cycle annealing, *n*— **annealing** employing a predetermined and closely controlled time-temperature cycle to produce specific properties or a specific microstructure.

decarburization, *n*—the loss of carbon from the surface of a steel object as a result of its being heated in a medium that reacts with the carbon.

differential heating, *n*—heating that intentionally produces a temperature gradient within a steel object such that, after cooling, a desired stress distribution or variation in properties is present within the object.

diffusion coating, *n*—any process whereby a base metal is either coated with another metal and heated to a sufficient temperature in a suitable environment, or exposed to a gaseous or liquid medium containing the other metal, thereby causing diffusion of the coating or other metal into the base metal, with a resultant change in the composition and properties of its surface.

direct quenching, *n*— *in thermochemical processing*, **quenching** immediately following the thermochemical treatment.

double aging, *n*—employment of two different aging treatments, in sequence, to control the type of precipitate formed from a supersaturated alloy matrix in order to obtain the desired properties.

DISCUSSION—the first aging treatment, sometimes referred to as intermediate or stabilizing, is usually carried out at a higher temperature than the second.

double tempering, *n*—a treatment in which a quench-hardened steel object is given two complete tempering cycles at substantially the same temperature for the purpose of ensuring completion of the tempering reaction and promoting stability of the resultant microstructure.

ferritizing anneal, *n*—a **heat treatment** that produces a predominantly ferritic matrix in a steel object.

flame annealing, *n*— **annealing** in which the heat is applied directly by a flame.

flame hardening, *n*—a process in which only the surface layer of a suitable steel object is heated by flame to above Ac_3 or Ac_{cm}, and then the object is **quenched**.

fog quenching, *n*— **quenching** in a mist.

full annealing, *n*— **annealing** a steel object by **austenitizing** it and then cooling it slowly through the **transformation range**.

DISCUSSION—The austenitizing temperature is usually above Ac_3 for hypoeutectoid steels and between Ac_1 and Ac_{cm} for hypereutectoid steels.

grain growth, *n*—an increase in the grain size of a steel object, usually as a result of exposure to elevated temperatures.

graphitization annealing, *n*—**annealing** a steel object in such a way that some or all of the carbon is precipitated as graphite.

hardenability, *n*—the property that determines the depth and distribution of hardness induced by **quenching** a steel object.

hardening, *n*—increasing the hardness by suitable treatment, usually involving heating and cooling.

DISCUSSION—Where applicable, it is preferred that the following more specific terms be used: **age hardening**, **case hardening**, **flame hardening**, **induction hardening**, **precipitation hardening**, and **quench hardening**.

heat treatment, *n*—heating and cooling a steel object in such a way as to obtain desired conditions or properties.

DISCUSSION—Heating for the sole purpose of hot working is excluded from the meaning of this definition.

homogeneous carburizing, *n*—a process that converts a low-carbon steel to one of substantially uniform and higher carbon content throughout the section, so that a specific response to **hardening** may be obtained.

homogenizing, *n*—holding a steel object at high temperature to eliminate or decrease chemical segregation by diffusion.

hot quenching, *n*—an imprecise term used to cover a variety of quenching procedures in which the quenching medium is maintained at a prescribed temperature above 160°F or 70°C.

induction hardening, *n*— *in surface hardening*, a process in which only the surface layer of a suitable steel object is heated by electrical induction to above Ac_3 or Ac_{cm}, and then the object is **quenched** .

induction hardening, *n*— *in through hardening*, a process in which a suitable steel object is heated by electrical induction to above Ac_3 or Ac_{cm} throughout its section, and then the object is **quenched** .

induction heating, *n*—heating by electrical induction.

intermediate annealing, *n*— **annealing** wrought steel objects at one or more stages during manufacture prior to final thermal treatment.

interrupted aging, *n*— **aging** at two or more temperatures, by steps, and cooling to room temperature after each step.

interrupted quenching, *n*— **quenching** in which the object being quenched is removed from the quenching medium while the object is at a temperature substantially higher than that of the quenching medium.

isothermal annealing, *n*— **austenitizing** a steel object and then cooling it to, and holding it at, a temperature at which austenite transforms to a ferrite-carbide aggregate.

isothermal transformation, *n*—a change in phase at any constant temperature.

M_f **,** M_s—See **transformation temperature**.

maraging, *n*—a precipitation hardening treatment applied to a special group of **alloy steels** to precipitate one or more intermetallic compounds in a matrix of essentially carbon-free martensite.

martempering, *n*— **quenching** an austenitized steel object in a medium at a temperature in the upper part of, or slightly above, the **martensite range**, holding it in the medium until its temperature is substantially uniform throughout, and then cooling it in air through the **martensite range**.

martensite range, *n*—the temperature interval between M_s and M_f.

natural aging, *n*—spontaneous aging of a super-saturated solid solution at room temperature.

nitriding, *n*—introducing nitrogen into a solid steel object by holding it at a suitable temperature in contact with a nitrogenous environment.

normalizing, *n*—heating a steel object to a suitable temperature above the **transformation range** and then cooling it in air to a temperature substantially below the **transformation range**.

overaging, *n*—**aging** under conditions of time and temperature greater than those required to obtain maximum change in a certain property, so that the property is altered away from the maximum.

overheating, *n*—heating a steel object to such a high temperature that excessive grain growth occurs.

DISCUSSION—Unlike burning, it may be possible to restore the original properties/microstructure by further heat treatment or mechanical working, or a combination thereof.

patenting, *n*—*in wire making*, heating a medium-carbon or high-carbon steel before wire drawing, or between drafts, to a temperature above the **transformation range**, and then cooling it in air, or a bath of molten lead or salt, to a temperature below Ae_1.

post-weld heat treatment, *n*—heating weldments immediately after welding, to provide **tempering** , **stress relieving**, or a controlled rate of cooling to prevent formation of a hard or brittle microstructure.

precipitation hardening, *n*— **hardening** caused by the precipitation of a constituent from a supersaturated solid solution.

precipitation heat treatment, *n*—**artificial aging** in which a constituent precipitates from a supersaturated solid solution.

preheating, *n*—*for tool steels*, heating to an intermediate temperature immediately before final **austenitizing**.

preheating, *n*—heating before welding, a mechanical treatment, or some further thermal treatment.

process annealing, *n*— *in the sheet and wire industries*, heating a steel object to a temperature close to, but below, Ac_1 and then cooling it, in order to soften it for further cold working.

progressive aging, *n*— **aging** by increasing the temperature in steps, or continuously, during the aging cycle.

quench aging, *n*— **aging** associated with **quenching** after **solution heat treatment**.

~~quench annealing,~~ ~~*n*— **annealing** an austenitic steel object by **solution heat treatment**~~.

quench hardening, *n*— **hardening** a steel object by **austenitizing** it, and then cooling it rapidly enough that some or all of the austenite transforms to martensite.

DISCUSSION—The austenitizing temperature is usually above Ac_3 for hypoeutectoid steels and between Ac_1 and Ac_{cm} for hypereutectoid steels.

quenching, *n*—rapid cooling.

DISCUSSION—Where applicable, it is preferred that the following more specific terms be used: **fog quenching, hot quenching, interrupted quenching, selective quenching, spray quenching,** and **time quenching**.

recrystallization, *n*—the formation of a new grain structure through a nucleation and growth process.

DISCUSSION—This is commonly produced by subjecting a steel object, which may be strained, to suitable conditions of time and temperature.

recrystallization annealing, *n*—**annealing** a cold-worked steel object to produce a new grain structure without a change in phase.

recrystallization temperature, *n*— the approximate minimum temperature at which recrystallization of a cold-worked steel object occurs within a specified time.

secondary hardening, *n*—the hardening phenomenon that occurs during high-temperature **tempering** of certain **steels** containing one or more carbide-forming alloying elements.

selective heating, *n*—intentionally heating only certain portions of a steel object.

selective quenching, *n*— **quenching** only certain portions of a steel object.

semicontinuous-conveyance furnace, *n*— a heating device through which steel objects are intentionally moved in accordance with a predetermined start-stop-start pattern during the thermal processing cycle.

shell hardening, *n*—a surface hardening process in which a suitable steel object, when heated through and quench hardened, develops a martensitic layer or shell that closely follows the contour of the piece and surrounds a **core** of essentially pearlitic transformation product.

DISCUSSION—This result is accomplished by a proper balance between section size, **hardenability**, and severity of quench.

slack quenching, *n*—the incomplete **hardening** of a steel object due to **quenching** from the austenitizing temperature at a rate slower than the **critical cooling rate** for the particular steel composition, resulting in the formation of one or more transformation products in addition to martensite.

snap temper, *n*—a precautionary interim stress-relieving treatment applied to a high-hardenability steel immediately after **quenching** to prevent cracking because of delay in **tempering** it at the prescribed higher temperature.

soaking, *n*—prolonged holding at a selected temperature.

solution heat treatment, *n*—heating a steel object to a suitable temperature, holding it at that temperature long enough to cause one or more constituents to enter into solid solution, and then cooling it rapidly enough to hold such constituents in solution.

spheroidizing, *n*—heating and cooling a steel object to produce a spheroidal or globular form of carbide in its microstructure.

DISCUSSION—Spheroidizing methods commonly used are the following: (1) prolonged holding at a temperature just below Ae_1; (2) heating and cooling alternately between temperatures that are just above, and just below, Ae_1; (3) heating to a temperature above Ae_1 or Ae_3 and then cooling very slowly in the furnace or holding at a temperature just below Ae_1; (4) cooling, from the minimum temperature at which all carbide is dissolved, at a rate suitable to prevent the reformation of a carbide network, and then reheating in accordance with Method (1) or (2) above. (Applicable to hypereutectoid steels containing a carbide network.)

spray quenching, *n*— **quenching** in a spray of liquid.

stabilizing treatment, *n*—any treatment intended to stabilize the microstructure or dimensions of a steel object.

strain aging, *n*— **aging** induced by cold working.

stress relieving, *n*—heating a steel object to a suitable temperature, holding it long enough to reduce residual stresses, and then cooling it slowly enough to minimize the development of new residual stresses.

subcritical annealing, *n*— **annealing** at a temperature slightly below Ac_1.

surface hardening, *n*—a generic term covering any of several processes that, by **quench hardening** only, produce in a steel object a surface layer that is harder or more wear resistant than the **core**.

DISCUSSION—There is no significant alteration of the chemical composition of the surface layer. Where applicable, it is preferred that the following

more specific terms be used: **induction hardening, flame hardening**, and **shell hardening**.

temper brittleness, *n*—brittleness that results when certain **steels** are held within, or are cooled slowly through, a certain range of temperature below the **transformation range**.

tempering, *n*—reheating a quench hardened or normalized steel object to a temperature below Ac_1, and then cooling it at any desired rate.

thermochemical treatment, *n*—a **heat treatment** carried out in a medium suitably chosen to produce a change in the chemical composition of the steel object by exchange with the medium.

time quenching, *n*—interrupted **quenching** in which the duration of holding in the quenching medium is controlled.

transformation ranges, *n*—those ranges of temperature within which austenite forms during heating and transforms during cooling.

DISCUSSION—The two ranges are distinct, sometimes overlapping but never coinciding. The limiting temperatures of the ranges are dependent upon the steel composition and the rate of change of temperature, particularly during cooling.

transformation temperature, *n*—the temperature at which a change in phase occurs, with the limiting temperatures of the **transformation ranges** designated using the following symbols:

Ac_{cm}—the temperature at which the solution of cementite in austenite is completed during heating.
Ac_1—the temperature at which austenite begins to form during heating.
Ac_3—the temperature at which transformation of ferrite to austenite is completed during heating.
Ac_4—the temperature at which austenite transforms to delta ferrite during heating.
Ae_1, Ae_3, Ae_{cm}, Ae_4—the temperatures of phase change at equilibrium.
Ar_{cm}—the temperature at which precipitation of cementite starts during cooling.
Ar_1—the temperature at which transformation of austenite to ferrite or to ferrite plus cementite is completed during cooling.
Ar_3—the temperature at which austenite begins to transform to ferrite during cooling.
Ar_4—the temperature at which delta ferrite transforms to austenite during cooling.
M_f—the temperature at which transformation of austenite to martensite is substantially completed during cooling.
M_s—the temperature at which transformation of austenite to martensite starts during cooling.

DISCUSSION—All of the above changes, except the formation of martensite, occur at lower temperatures during cooling than during heating, and are dependent upon the rate of change of temperature.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

Committee A01 has identified the location of selected changes to this ~~standard~~ terminology since the last issue (, A 941 – 0~~1~~)3, that may impact the use of this ~~standard.~~ terminology.

~~*(1)* Changed "columbium (niobium)" to "niobium (columbium)" in 3.1.~~
~~*(2)*~~
(*1*) Added a definition for ~~microalloyed steel~~ product analysis in ~~3.1.~~
~~*(3)* Revised the definition~~ 3.1.
(*2*) Added an entry for ~~heat~~ check analysis ~~by adding~~ in 3.1.
(*3*) Added a ~~discussion section~~ definition for feroalloy in 3.1.
(*4*) Deleted the definitions for black annealing, cyaniding, and quench annealing in 3.2; deleted all references in 3.2 to those terms.